IN THE CLAIMS

    1. (Currently Amended) A method of determining an annotation for a document, the method comprising the steps of:

    obtaining an annotation proposed by a user to be associated with the document; ~~and~~

    automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base containing allowed annotations, whether the user-proposed annotation matches one or more allowed annotations from the knowledge base; <u>and</u>

    annotating the document with an allowed annotation from the knowledge base when the user-proposed annotation matches the allowed annotation from the knowledge base;

    wherein the user need not consider any annotations when a single allowed annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation, and when more than a single annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation: (a) in a first mode, the user need only consider the matching allowed annotations and select one of the matching allowed annotations; and (b) in a second mode, the user need not consider any annotations but rather one of the allowed annotations is automatically selected.

    2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying the user that the user-proposed annotation does not match at least one allowed annotation, when no match is found.

    3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing a user-proposed annotation/allowed annotation match, when a match is found.

    4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying the user that the user-proposed annotation matches more than one allowed annotation, when more than one match is found.

    5. (Canceled).

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user is notified of match results after each attempted matching operation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user is notified of match results after a predetermined number of attempted matching operations.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining a history buffer of matches.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the history buffer is used to update a set of allowed annotations.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the history buffer is used to disambiguate matches.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the automatic determining step further comprises determining a closeness between the user-proposed annotation and the at least one allowed annotation.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the knowledge base comprises at least one term graph.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the automatic determining step further comprises the steps of:

determining a node in the at least one term graph that corresponds to the user-proposed annotation;

determining at least one node in the at least one term graph that corresponds to the at least one allowed annotation; and

computing a distance between the nodes.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein node determination comprises a stemming operation.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for determining an annotation for a document, the apparatus comprising:

a memory; and

at least one processor coupled to the memory and operative to: (i) obtain an annotation proposed by a user to be associated with the document; ~~and~~ (ii) automatically ~~determining~~ determine, in accordance with a knowledge base containing allowed annotations, whether the user-proposed annotation matches one or more allowed annotations from the knowledge base; and (iii) ~~annotating~~ annotate the document with an allowed annotation from the knowledge base when the user-proposed annotation matches the allowed annotation from the knowledge base;

wherein the user need not consider any annotations when a single allowed annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation, and when more than a single annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation: (a) in a first mode, the user need only consider the matching allowed annotations and select one of the matching allowed annotations; and (b) in a second mode, the user need not consider any annotations but rather one of the allowed annotations is automatically selected.

17. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for determining an annotation for a document, comprising a machine readable medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

obtaining an annotation proposed by a user to be associated with the document; ~~and~~

automatically determining, in accordance with a knowledge base containing allowed annotations, whether the user-proposed annotation matches one or more allowed annotation from the knowledge base; and

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annotating the document with an allowed annotation from the knowledge base when the user-proposed annotation matches the allowed annotation from the knowledge base;

wherein the user need not consider any annotations when a single allowed annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation, and when more than a single annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation: (a) in a first mode, the user need only consider the matching allowed annotations and select one of the matching allowed annotations; and (b) in a second mode, the user need not consider any annotations but rather one of the allowed annotations is automatically selected.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a service for determining an annotation for a document, comprising the step of:

a service provider deploying a system operative to: (i) obtain an annotation proposed by a user to be associated with the document; ~~and~~ (ii) automatically ~~determining~~ determine, in accordance with a knowledge base containing allowed annotations, whether the user-proposed annotation matches one or more allowed annotations from the knowledge base; and (iii) ~~annotating~~ annotate the document with an allowed annotation from the knowledge base when the user-proposed annotation matches the allowed annotation from the knowledge base;

wherein the user need not consider any annotations when a single allowed annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation, and when more than a single annotation is automatically determined to match the user-proposed annotation: (a) in a first mode, the user need only consider the matching allowed annotations and select one of the matching allowed annotations; and (b) in a second mode, the user need not consider any annotations but rather one of the allowed annotations is automatically selected.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~annotated document~~ user-proposed annotation is stored, when the user-proposed annotation matches the allowed annotation, such that the user-proposed annotation is useable in a subsequent ~~search~~ match operation.